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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4864
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1026
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9798
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0259
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4256
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1718
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3446
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0443
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6895
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4511
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2782
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0424
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001050

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2026

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: MANUVEURING FOR CHANGE

REF: A. A) RANGOON 775

[1](#)B. B) RANGOON 545 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: CDA Shari Villarosa for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: Aung San Suu Kyi's (ASSK) doctor met with Charge July 20 to discuss recent developments. He has not seen her since June 10 when she was ill, but expects to see her again by early August. He indicated that plans to use Martyr's Day, July 19, to launch public protests against the regime had been thwarted by leaks, but predicted that popular action would take place this year because of rising discontent. He introduced young women that he has encouraged to get involved in politics since police will be "nicer" to them if arrested than men. He also appeared to support Vice Senior General Maung Aye as a better alternative to Than Swe, even though Maung Aye is very hardline against the ethnic minorities. He noted that ASSK does not give him specific instructions anymore as to what to say to whom, so his thoughts that follow should be read as his own and not hers, but offers insights into opposition thinking. End Summary

[1](#)2. (S) Dr. Tin Myo Win, aka Douglas, has been ASSK's personal doctor for more than a decade. He also counsels and provides medical care to other political activists, including former political prisoners like Min Ko Naing, whom he called his "deputy" in 1988. Proudly showing his bio in a government book of political opponents, Douglas said since he is considered pro-Western, he is listed in the regime's green book, as opposed to the red book listing Communists. He too spent time in prison, and gets regularly questioned by intelligence personnel. Introducing Charge to some young women he has encouraged to get involved in politics, Douglas told them that they would not be treated as harshly as men or tortured by the authorities if arrested.

[1](#)3. (S) Douglas last saw ASSK June 10 when he treated for her stomach illness (ref A). His planned meetings with her this month were cancelled at the last moment, but he expressed confidence that he would see her again by the first week of

August. When asked how he learns when ASSK becomes ill, Douglas said she gave orders not to call him unless she is unconscious. To head off that extreme event, he has arranged with one of her helpers to contact him. When they do meet, they have long discussions about more than just health. ASSK used to tell him specifically what to say to whom, but now she gives more general instructions. He cited a recent example where he pointed out the importance of timing to an NLD spokesman referring to a recent statement by Secretary Rice.

¶4. (S) Douglas spent most of the meeting discussing the permutations of promoting a transition in the military leadership. He implied that deals were underway involving ASSK, Khin Nyunt and former dictator Ne Win's son, which were discovered, and led to Khin Nyunt's downfall. Now change would come from Vice Senior General Maung Aye, whom Douglas described as "unambitious, but not corrupt." He recounted a convoluted story implying that the removal of Than Shwe's wife's nephew as Customs Director General was evidence that Maung Aye has the upper hand. Douglas acknowledged that Maung Aye is very hardline against the ethnic minorities, but still viewed sees him as a better alternative than Senior General Than Shwe.

¶5. (S) Meanwhile, popular discontent against the military is growing, according to Douglas. He confirmed rumors of a planned demonstration on Martyr's Day, July 19. A "people's march" had been planned to the Martyr's Monument, he said, but was cancelled when word got out ahead of time. So much leaked that the government-controlled press indirectly confirmed the rumors in advance, and announced that action would be taken if there were any disturbances. Douglas

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concluded that timing again was important, pointing out that the world's attention had turned to the Middle East and North Korea, so any demonstration in Burma might not be noticed. He predicted that popular action would still happen this year, and cited Than Shwe's astrologer's prediction that 2006 would be his last year in Rangoon.

¶6. (S) Comment: While we have little option but to rely on Douglas for word from Aung San Suu Kyi, he is known to have his own personal agenda, which the above opinions likely reflect. He regularly talks with someone close to Maung Aye, and personally may view him as more palatable than Than Shwe.

However, taking a harder line against the ethnic minorities making up 40 percent of the population is not a recipe for future stability in Burma. This also shows why the ethnic minorities do not trust any ethnic Burman apart from ASSK to look out for their interests. We have heard other rumors that some in the military would support a Maung Aye move against Than Shwe, but most observers see Than Shwe more firmly in control today and Maung Aye increasingly marginalized. In any event, changes at the top will not suffice. The change Burma needs requires the generals to give way to the people, but like the aborted march, the opposition can't seem to get its act together. Politics has been primarily a male preserve, so perhaps getting more women involved will help, although we doubt they will be treated any nicer by the authorities.

VILLAROSA